

Young Man's Game

Niners quarterback Steve Young is on track to win his sixth NFL passing championship, tying Sammy Baugh for the league record, an accomplishment that would be impressive considering what Young is up against this season. He's 36, he's without all-world wide receiver Jerry Rice (sidelined since suffering a knee injury in the season opener), and he may have his weakest supporting cast yet. To show what an outstanding year Young is having, we compared 1997 with each of the years he won the passing title, looking at his statistics, the number of his offensive teammates who went to the Pro Bowl and the production he got from his top two wide receivers.

YEAR	QB RATING	COMP PCT.	TD-INT.	WIDEOUTS CATCHES-YARDS/GAME	PRO BOWL PLAYERS
1991	101.8	.645	17-8	Rice-John Taylor, 9.0-138	2
1992	107.0	.667	25-7	Rice-Mike Sherrard, 7.6-113	5
1993	101.5	.680	29-16	Rice-Taylor, 9.6-153	6
1994	112.8	.703	35-10	Rice-Taylor, 9.6-127	5
1996	97.2	.677	14-6	Rice-Terrell Owens, 8.9-111	1
1997	104.0	.668	14-5	Owens-J.J. Stokes, 7.0-101	

coming—unless Shanahan took a job with the Broncos, for whom he had worked as an assistant before being hired by Davis. When Shanahan objected, he says Davis told him, "If I don't want to pay you, it'll cost you more money going through the court system than the money you'll get from the contract."

Each side presented its case at an arbitration hearing conducted by the NFL in Los Angeles in 1990, and the league ruled in Shanahan's favor. Davis appealed, and last week the league said it was still awaiting a reply from Shanahan's lawyers.

"This is a new twist, and it's as ridiculous

as all the others," Raiders chief executive Amy Trask says of the coach's demand. "Mr. Shanahan had his day in court, so to speak, where we found proof that [Shanahan and the Broncos] had perjured themselves."

Trask declined to elaborate on the perjury accusation, other than to say, "Since we presented proof that he and the Broncos perjured themselves, we haven't heard a peep from Shanahan, the Broncos or the NFL." Asked on Monday about the Raiders' charge, Shanahan laughed. —MICHAEL SILVER

Dispatches

Eagles quarterback Bobby Hoying was terrific in his first NFL start, a 10-10 tie against the Ravens. Despite being sacked nine times, he completed 26 of 38 passes for 276 yards and looked like a leader. "I was amazed that a guy that we've been talking about as the quarterback of the future could be such a great quarterback of the present," Eagles owner Jeff Lurie said. ... Playing for Philadelphia, defensive end William Fuller had more sacks (35½) from 1994 to '96 than Bruce Smith or Reggie White. The Chargers thought they had a steal when they signed Fuller to a two-year,

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

"We need to talk,"
means
"I need to complain."

WINSTON
NO ADDITIVES
TRUE TASTE

16 mg. "tar," 1.1 mg. nicotine
av. per cigarette by FTC method.



rookie tackles Renaldo Wynn and Seth Payne helped limit Tennessee running back Eddie George to 49 yards—makes the Jaguars Super Bowl contenders. A loss by Denver on Sunday left Jacksonville one game out of the race for home field advantage in the playoffs, and the Jaguars, who are tied atop the AFC Central with the Steelers, have a favorable schedule: at Cincinnati, at home against Baltimore and New England, then at Buffalo and Oakland. For the second straight year Jacksonville should have January football on its calendar.

Life with Mike

Would anyone care remotely about the 4-7 Saints if Mike Ditka weren't in charge? He humiliated his team last month while doing a skit on *Saturday Night Live* and has provided innumerable sound bites. On the field he's a one-man Broadway show. He has spiked his gum in a sideline rage, paid off a \$25 bet to defensive coordinator Zaven Yarbalian at the end of the Nov. 9 win over the Raiders with TV cameras trained on him (he wrote a letter of apology to NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue and won't be fined) and chewed out quarterback Heath Shuler. "I love it," general manager Bill Kuharich says of Ditka's emotion. "Against the Raiders, Mike willed our team to a win."

Three things have surprised Ditka.

1) *The poor play of his offense in general and Shuler in particular, both ranked 30th in the league.* The jury remains out on Shuler, but regardless of who's at quarterback, Ditka knows the offense won't go anywhere until shortcomings on the line are addressed in the off-season.

2) *The atmosphere in the Saints' locker room.* "These are great guys," Ditka says. "They're just awfully quiet. Nobody talks. I've used all of my speeches, all my Knute Rocknes, but I don't know if they're working."

3) *The amount of energy he has exerted.* I didn't realize how tired I could get mentally," he says.

Despite whispers around the league that frustration would lead him to call it quits after this season, Ditka will be back for Year 2. Three weeks ago he and Kuharich spent four hours formulating off-season plans.

Advantage, Shanahan

Mike Shanahan has won more regular-season games than any NFL coach over the past two seasons, but one battle he feels

Send your NFL questions to Peter King and read more Dr. Z at www.cnnsi.com

THE Let's

The Redskins' Cris Dishman is one of the few NFL cornerbacks with the size and strength to go toe-to-toe with Michael Irvin, the Cowboys' 6' 2", 207-pound Pro Bowl wideout. Irvin is notorious for the pushes and shoves he doles out while running a pass route, and he's also a specialist at using his big frame to shield smaller defensive backs from the ball. The best way to combat him, says the 6-foot, 195-pound Dishman, is to play his game. In the Redskins' 21-16 win over the Cowboys on Oct. 13, Irvin caught five passes for 81 yards and one score. In the rematch on Sunday, a 17-14 Dallas win at Texas Stadium, Dishman had the upper hand until late in the game, when Irvin caught four passes for 64 yards, including the game-tying touchdown. Below, Dishman, a 10-year veteran and off-season free-agent signee, discusses the techniques he uses against perhaps the league's most physical wide receiver.

"The first thing I think of when I see Dallas on the schedule is Michael Irvin. The other big guys I've faced this season are the Cardinals' Rob Moore and the Lions' Herman Moore, but neither is as physical as Irvin. [Fellow Redskins cornerback] Darrell Green has covered Irvin more than I have, but there isn't much advice Darrell can give me because he's faster and smaller than me, and our styles are so different.

"So much of the Cowboys' offense is based on timing, so I've got to throw them off. If [Troy] Aikman's pass is supposed to be at a spot nine yards downfield, I've got to keep Michael from getting there on time. I'll do that by not letting him get off the line. You can't do that all the time because he's so strong

PHIL HUBER

he'll never win is a financial dispute with his former boss, Raiders owner Al Davis. That's why Shanahan, coach of the 9-2 Broncos, has given up trying to collect the \$250,000 he says Davis owes him under the contract Shanahan signed to become the Raiders' coach in 1988. Though the league has ruled in his favor, Shanahan this week will ask that Davis instead donate

WINSTON NATURAL #170
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED 11/24/97

LTS ADVERTISING SERVICES (516) 265-0404



Dishman held Irvin in check until late in the game.

that he'll push right past you. Sometimes I have to hold him. The refs know it happens, but they can't always call it.

"I don't get a lot of holding penalties, because I'm good at it. Against Michael, you have no choice but to hold. Otherwise he's going to shove you down the field.

"I watched almost 20 hours of film this week trying to see if Michael is doing anything different from the last time we played, and one thing he's doing a lot more of is the stutter-and-go routes. He'll go nine yards, stutter-step and then blast past the cornerback. My best defense is to bump him at the line and then do it some more.

"Our standard coverage has Darrell and me playing man-to-man. The safeties move up to help stop the run. That leaves Michael and me, and it can get rough. That's fine with me. I was born for this."

—RICHARD DEUTSCH

the money—plus interest—to the Oakland Unified School District. "It's a lot of money, but I'd rather see it go to the schoolchildren of Oakland," Shanahan says. "It's time to move on."

The \$250,000 is what Shanahan says he was due when Davis fired him four games into the '89 season. According to Shanahan, Davis told him the money would be forth-

2070495365